Hearing Set on JFK Book, But Lawyers Seek an Out

A hearing date of Jan. 5 was set yesterday on Mrs. John F. Kennedy's move for a temporary injunction to halt publication of William Manchester's book, "The Death of a President."

Despite reports of a pending settlement Tuesday night between the book's publishers, Harper & Row, and Mrs. Kennedy, the possibility of a trial still was not erased. State Supreme Court Justice Saul S. Streit scheduled the date after a half-hour conference in chambers with lawyers for both sides.

Following the meeting, former Federal Judge Simon H. Rifkind, attorney for the President's widow, said: "We will negotiate, and if no settlement is reached, the judge will direct an early trial."

Rifkind indicated that during this interval the parties will answer Mrs. Kennedy's complaints. The controversy concerns certain passages in the manuscript that Mrs. Kennedy regards as highly personal and of little historical interest.

Schlesinger Backs Jackie on Book

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., former adviser to President Kennedy, contended yesterday that if Harper & Row is upheld in the matter of the controversial Manchester book, "The Death of a President," and if the interviewed loses all rights to the interview, the oral history program of future historians "would be dead."

Schlesinger criticized author William Manchester for delving into the personal life of Mrs. John F. Kennedy in his forthcoming book. He said there were "restraints" inherent in the interviews with the President's widow and that beyond this, Manchester "had the explicit restraint of a written contract."

Now on the faculty of the City University of New York, Schlesinger made his remarks before nearly 2,000 persons at a meeting of the American Historical Association at the New York Hilton Hotel.